POLICY ON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

Effective Date: June 1, 2016

Originating Office: Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

Supersedes /Amends: May 21, 2010

Policy Number: VPRGS-4

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Postdoctoral Fellows at Concordia University and should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines and Procedures for Postdoctoral Fellows* ("PDF Guidelines") available on the website of the School of Graduate Studies. This Policy replaces the May 21, 2010 Policy and is consistent with policies and practices at other Canadian and Quebec universities.

PREAMBLE

Postdoctoral Fellows ("PDF"s) are valued members of the University community and embody the university's commitment to research. As researchers, they have the opportunity to make significant and original contributions to their chosen field. They regularly collaborate with faculty members, contribute to scientific animation and may assist in student supervision in their research units. In all disciplines, the principal objectives of PDFs are to broaden their research expertise in association with established researchers and to strengthen their publication record and curricula vitae. They accomplish this through exposure to and collaboration with their research environment(s), thereby enhancing their chances of securing more permanent positions in academic or research establishments or in industry. The University expects that PDFs will comply with University policies as well as recognize their affiliation with the University in their publications and in their participation in scholarly activities.

POLICY

Definition of a Postdoctoral Fellow

1. Depending on the job description, nature of supervision and source and provenance of the research grant/fellowship, a PDF may be a Postdoctoral Fellow as an award recipient or a Postdoctoral Fellow as an employee. The PDF designations used at the University are as follows:

a. A **Postdoctoral Fellow is an award recipient** when the PDF is awarded a competitive fellowship from an external granting agency, which may or may not be paid through the University, or when a PDF receives financial support from a sponsoring agency. These PDFs do not have an employment relationship with the University.

b. A **Postdoctoral Fellow is an employee** when a PDF plays a key role on a research team under the direction of and funded by the supervising faculty member, and is paid a salary.

PDFs normally meet the following criteria:

a. they hold a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree awarded within the five years preceding their date of appointment. This criteria may only be extended by the Dean of Graduate Studies, due to circumstances requiring an interruption in the PDF's research career (e.g. medical necessity, parental responsibilities or other personal matters);

b. they hold a full-time appointment status for a limited period of time, normally one year to a maximum of three years in aggregate, with the possibility of renewal to a maximum total of five years;

c. they are involved in full-time research and scholarship. In that capacity, PDFs may apply for research grants and contracts with the status of co-investigator (if funding agency rules permit). The appointment may include minimal teaching or other responsibilities, which are remunerated separately;

d. they are mentored under the supervision of one or more faculty mentors/supervisors at the University;

e. they are expected to publish the results of the research they have conducted during the period of the PDF appointment, unless otherwise restricted by a specific agreement;

f. they must be assured of financial support.

Recruitment

2. In most cases, a faculty member who has funding to support a PDF will conduct the selection process personally or with other faculty members if there is joint funding for the appointment. Faculty members are expected to exercise due diligence with regards to reference checks and letters of recommendation. When recruiting PDFs, faculty members must adhere to all relevant legislation, including the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and all federal and provincial laws and regulations concerning immigration.

3. In other cases, individuals may have been awarded postdoctoral fellowships through a government or other funding agency and will initiate the appointment process themselves. In these cases, the funding agency's policies will take precedence over this Policy should there be any inconsistencies.

Stipend

4. Postdoctoral stipend/salary support can be assembled from various sources (external or internal). In all cases and at all times, regardless of the source of financial support, stipend/salary levels for PDFs must meet the minimum stipend/salary set by the University. More detailed information on the minimum stipend/salary is outlined in the Postdoctoral Guidelines.

5. Any engagements by the PDF in addition to PDF activities should be compensated at a level consistent with the PDF's qualifications and responsibilities.

Appointment Process

6. The letter inviting the individual to come to the University must be signed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. By signing the letter, the Dean accepts the PDF into the University. See Sample Letter of Invitation available on the School of Graduate Studies Website.

   The Letter of Invitation shall specify:

   a. the term of appointment as a PDF (if appointed for an initial two-three years, the agreement should contain a condition of review after one year and subsequent continuation dependent upon a satisfactory evaluation);

b. the name of mentoring/supervising faculty member(s) and the Department Chair or equivalent;

c. the status of the PDF, specifically, whether the PDF is a Postdoctoral Fellow award recipient or a Postdoctoral Fellow employee of the University;

d. the source(s) of funding;

e. the salary/stipend arrangements and method of compensation;

f. the nature of the research to be undertaken;

g. the teaching duties, if assigned, to a maximum load of one course (three credits) per term (unless otherwise specified by the funding agency);

h. the office location;

i. any special conditions (e.g., subject to immigration approval if applicable).

7. The PDF shall sign the letter of invitation to indicate their acceptance of the offer of appointment and return it to the Postdoctoral Officer at the School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies shall forward a copy to the PDF's mentor(s)/supervisor(s), the Department Chair or equivalent, and the Faculty Dean. The new PDF will then be sent a welcome package by the Postdoctoral Officer.

8. Mentor(s)/supervisor(s) should give reasonable notice to a PDF concerning his or her intention to extend/renew or not to extend/renew an appointment. If the decision is to extend/renew, the PDF must receive an extension/renewal letter outlining the terms of the extension/renewal, and it must be signed by the mentor(s)/supervisor(s), the Department Chair or equivalent and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The PDF shall sign this extension/renewal letter to indicate their acceptance and shall return it to the School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies shall forward a copy to the PDF's mentor(s)/supervisor(s), the Department Chair or equivalent, and the Faculty Dean. An appointment may be extended/renewed provided the PDF still falls within the definition of a PDF and the extension/renewal would not normally exceed the total time limit of five years.

9. A PDF's appointment will automatically cease at the end of the term of appointment.

Postdoctoral Registration

10. Registration is essential to Concordia's ability to comply with provincial regulations governing PDFs.

11. In order to have complete access to university facilities and services, all PDFs must be registered annually with the Postdoctoral Officer at the School of Graduate Studies. Specific documentation must also be submitted to complete this registration process. Such documentation includes:

    a. the original Registration Form, available on the School of Graduate Studies website, with all required signatures;

    b. a copy of the Letter of Invitation with all required signatures;

    c. the Postdoctoral Checklist, available on the School of Graduate Studies website, which lists all the documents required in order to register.

12. All Concordia PDFs, both on and off campus, must be registered and administered through the Postdoctoral Office, regardless of whether the funding comes directly from the funding agency or through the University.

13. Once registered, PDFs are entitled to hold University student and employee identity cards, thereby gaining access to an email account and University facilities and services.

International Postdoctoral Fellows

14. It should be noted that the appointment procedure for Canadian and non-Canadian PDFs is the same. With respect to immigration considerations, a PDF position is exempt from advertising restrictions because Citizenship and Immigration Canada considers it to be an "extension of studies".

15. All international PDFs at the University must obtain a work permit prior to coming to the University to take on a PDF appointment.

16. Failure to obtain proper authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Canada automatically cancels the PDF's appointment without further recourse.

Intellectual Property

17. The PDF is expected to publish the results of the research conducted during the period of the PDF appointment, unless otherwise restricted by a specific agreement dealing with intellectual property ownership and/or publication restrictions. When appropriate, the PDF has an obligation to provide to the mentor(s)/supervisor(s) any data produced or collected while working under their supervision. Authorship rights of the PDF must be recognized in publications, based on and in proportion to his/her intellectual contribution. Ownership rights to the intellectual property will be governed by the same guidelines or policies that apply to University faculty members subject to the CUFA collective agreement.

Orientation

18. It is the joint responsibility of the mentor(s)/supervisor(s), the academic unit and the Postdoctoral Office at the School of Graduate Studies to orient the PDF to the University. This is essential to offer the PDF a personalized and rewarding experience at the University.

19. The mentor(s)/supervisor(s) and academic unit are responsible for conducting an orientation of the research location, and for providing information about performance expectations, safety procedures, ethical/scholarly integrity issues and attendance expectations.

20. The mentor(s)/supervisor(s) and academic unit are also responsible for conducting an orientation of the lab and/or office space, and for providing infrastructure support in order for the PDF to carry out his/her responsibilities.

21. The Postdoctoral Office is responsible for providing a forum for PDFs to network as well as information on services throughout the University, such as the University Libraries, Health Services, the Department of Athletics, Human Resources, IITS, etc. The Postdoctoral Office will host workshops for professional skills development, as well as some social opportunities in order to build a PDF community at the University.

Conflict Resolution

22. The well being of PDFs and the development of harmonious relationships with their mentor(s)/supervisor(s) are important to the University. It is essential that disputes be dealt with as quickly and fairly as possible. Disputes involving PDFs and another member of the University community shall be resolved in accordance with the process outlined in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the PDF Guidelines and as per the University's Code of Rights and Responsibilities . Like other members of the University community, PDFs may avail themselves of the services provided by the University Ombuds Office.

Appointment Completion or Termination

23. Upon completion of the PDF appointment, PDFs will be required to complete an exit interview with the Postdoctoral Office at the School of Graduate Studies.

24. The appointment of a PDF may be terminated at any time upon one month's notice.

25. It is imperative that the Postdoctoral Office be informed of all unanticipated terminations as soon as such decisions are taken.

26. Upon the recommendation of the mentor(s)/supervisor(s) and Department Chair or equivalent, PDFs will be provided, by the Dean of Graduate Studies, with a certificate recognizing the completion of their PDF appointment at the University. The certificate is not an academic credential.

Approved by Senate on March 20, 2009, and amended on May 21, 2010, and April 22, 2016.